

Plant of the Month — July 2013

Pleurocarpaea gracilis



Pleurocarpaea gracilis is a newly described species in the family Asteraceae. First collected in 1998 by Dr Stephen van Leeuwen at two isolated locations in the Hamersley Range, only a few subsequent collections have been made across ten sites 2-51 km apart in the Pilbara bioregion. It is known to flower between May and October and is found on the summit, slopes and sheltered gullies of rounded hills in skeletal, red, gritty soil over massive banded ironstone of the Brockman Iron Formation.

Pleurocarpaea is the only Australian endemic genus in the tribe Vernonieae and comprises only three species - in Queensland, the NT and WA. This genus has been isolated with no direct connection to another landmass within the time frame for Astereaceae evolution (maximum age c. 60 million years) and its nearest relatives are found in Africa. *P. gracilis* is the only endemic species to WA, and is named

for its delicate habit.

P. gracilis was previously known under the phrase-name 'Genus sp. Hamersley Range hilltops (S. van Leeuwen 4345)'. It has recently been described by Nicholas Lander and Johann Hurter [in our journal Nuytsia](#), from which much of this text is transcribed. This paper includes a key to all species, a number of colour plates including an image of the holotype and a distribution map.

Photo: S. Kern

[Find out more about *Pleurocarpaea gracilis*](#)

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Department of
Environment and Conservation
Western Australian Herbarium

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